

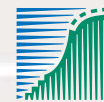
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Waterbirds around the world

A global overview of the conservation,
management and research of the
world's waterbird flyways

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Cover photography: Whooper Swans *Cygnus cygnus* arriving at Martin Mere, England. Photo: Paul Marshall.
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3.7 Sustainable use of natural resources in the African-Eurasian Flyway. Workshop Introduction

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The widespread Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* is one of the commonest duck species in many countries and makes up a large proportion of the annual harvest of waterbirds across Eurasia. Photo: Paul Marshall.

Conservation of migratory waterbirds can only be achieved by connecting the protection of migratory waterbird populations and the conservation of their habitats to the sustainable use of their populations themselves and the natural resources they depend upon.

However, in African-(West) Eurasian Flyways, the generally good knowledge of waterbirds is not being effectively transferred into necessary national and local actions. Nor have conservation efforts led to maintaining or restoring the health of many waterbird populations, including globally threatened species (see Davidson & Stroud, this volume).

There are urgent needs to integrate waterbird conservation as part of sustainable development, to the greater benefit of local communities and other stakeholders dependent on wetlands as well as benefiting biodiversity. The African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (UNEP/AEWA) provides a good basis to achieve this.

Traditional knowledge in the use of these resources by local human communities is more and more in danger of being lost and should be safe-guarded: it should be taken into account when developing action and management plans. The impact of intensive and/or detrimental use of natural resources, be it

marine fisheries or hunting, has to be reduced and controlled in order not to interfere with traditional sustainable use. However, there are some highly-unsustainable practises that need to be stopped (such as the use of lead gunshot in wetlands).

The Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian migratory waterbirds entered into force in 1999. Since then, 57 out of 119 potential Range States have ratified the Agreement to become Contracting Parties. The Preamble to the Agreement stresses that any taking of waterbirds must be undertaken sustainably, taking account of the conservation status of the specie concerned. A number of projects in the Agreement's International Implementation Priorities have addressed the sustainable use of natural resources. Accordingly, the Agreement provides a valuable framework within which to consider these issues.

A major African-Eurasian-Flyway GEF Project was approved in November 2003 and will start to be implemented in mid 2006. This project, which will be executed by Wetlands International in close cooperation with BirdLife International, will especially focusing on: capacity building, cooperative research and monitoring and communication activities.